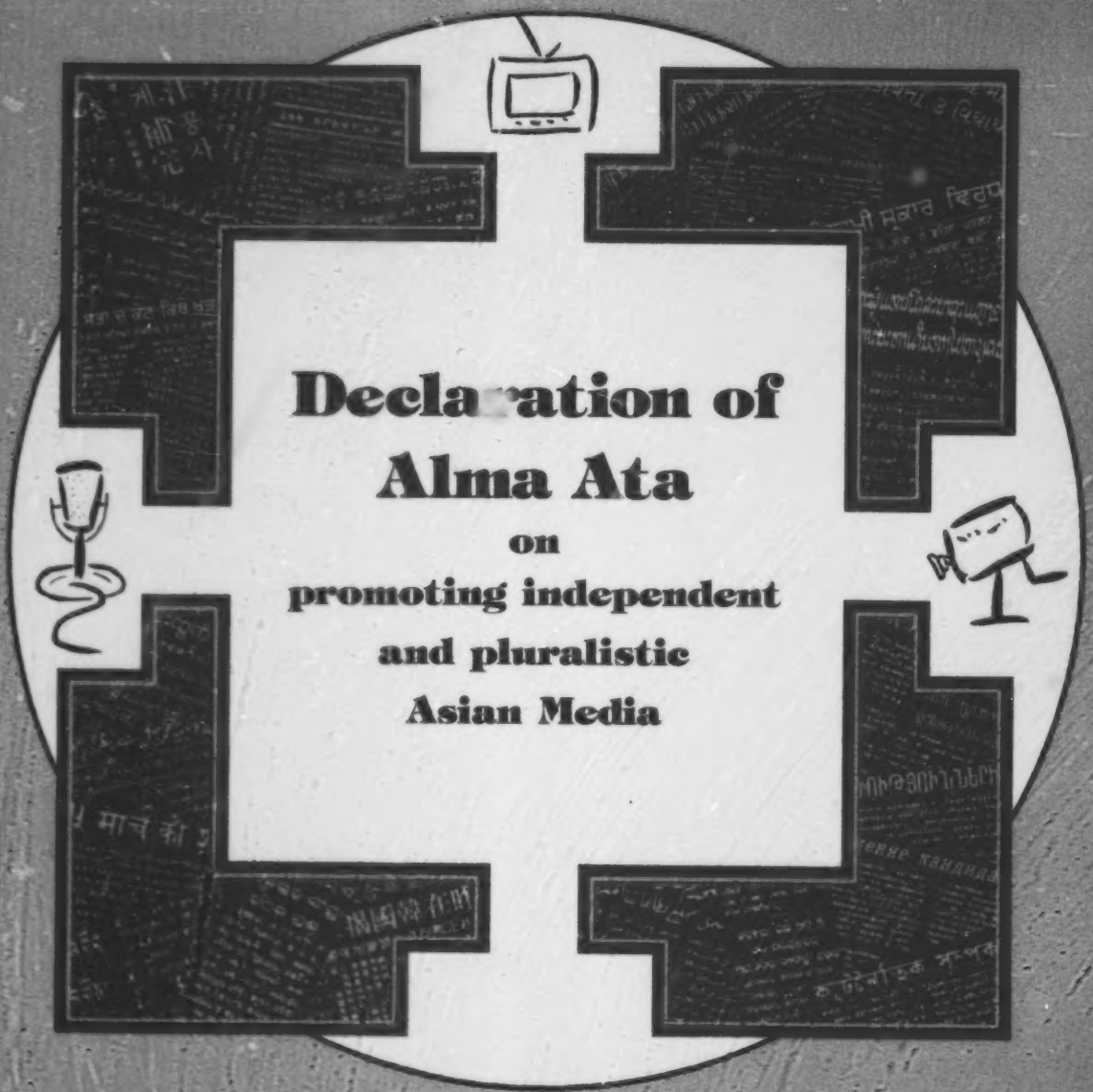


Declaration of Alma Ata

on promoting independent and pluralistic Asian Media

We the participants in the United Nations/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Asian Media, held in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, from 5 to 9 October 1992,

Recalling Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, and regardless of frontiers",

Recalling General Assembly Resolution 59(I) of 14 December 1946, stating that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and General Assembly Resolution 45/76 A of 11 December 1990 on information in the service of humanity,

Recalling Resolution 104 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-fifth session in 1989, in which the main focus is the promotion of "the free flow of ideas by word and image—at international as well as national levels",

Recalling Resolution 4.3 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-sixth session in 1991, which recognizes that a free, pluralistic and independent press is an essential component of any democratic society and which endorses the Declaration adopted by the participants at the United Nations/UNESCO Seminar on "Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press", held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 29 April to 3 May 1991,

Stressing the growing role of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), whose Intergovernmental Council decided, at its February 1992 session, to give priority to projects which seek to reinforce independent and pluralistic media,

Noting with appreciation the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Seminar, delivered on his behalf by his representative, the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the statement made by the Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics of UNESCO on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO at the opening of the Seminar,

Expressing our sincere appreciation to the United Nations and UNESCO for organizing the Seminar,

Expressing our gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Kazakhstan for their kind hospitality, which facilitated the success of the Seminar,

Expressing also our sincere appreciation to all the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental bodies and organizations, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which contributed to the United Nations/UNESCO effort to organize the Seminar,

Recognizing the historic emergence of newly independent media in the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union, and the need to build upon the innovative achievements of the Seminar in Africa,

Declare our full support for, and total commitment to, the fundamental principles of the Declaration of Windhoek, and acknowledge its importance as a milestone in the struggle for free, independent and pluralistic print and broadcast media in all regions of the world.

Specific Project Proposals

In Asia and the Pacific, including the newly independent Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union, which identify with the Asian region, we seek practical application of the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Windhoek, in conjunction with relevant national and international professional organisations and relevant UN agencies, in the following specific project proposals and in the following fields:

1. Legislation

To give expert advice and legal drafting assistance to replace redundant press laws inherited at independence with laws that create enforceable rights to freedom of expression, freedom of opinion, access to information and freedom of the press; to abolish monopolies and all forms of discrimination in broadcasting and allocation of frequencies, in printing, newspaper and magazine distribution, and in newsprint production and distribution; and to abolish barriers to launching new publications, and discriminatory taxation.

2. Training

To promote a programme of national in-country and sub-regional seminars and/or training courses covering:

(a) professional skills, including extensive training and treatment of development issues;

(b) management, marketing and technical skills for the print and broadcast media;

(c) international principles of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of information and freedom of the press;

(d) international principles of freedom of association, management/staff relations, collective bargaining skills and the rights and responsibilities of representative associations of journalists, editors, broadcasters and publishers;

(e) principles of journalists' independence and the relationship between the editorial department of a newspaper, the board of directors and the administrative, advertising and commercial departments;

(f) appropriate curricula and training methodology for journalism training institutions (including tutor/lecturer exchange programmes) and special trainer programmes;

(g) access to training programmes and facilities;

(h) codes of conduct relating to advertising in the broadcast media;

(i) the rights of women in the media, and the rights of minority groups within societies.

3. *Free Flow of Information*

As a matter of urgency:

(a) To support the establishment of media resource centres in the Central Asian Republics where journalists and other media personnel can gain access to international news and information, manuals, textbooks and study materials, and where they can utilize desktop publishing equipment to prepare material for publication;

(b) to assist independent media in the upgrading of production, content and presentation of television news and current affairs programmes through the provision of new technology and the exposure of staff to modern and alternative production techniques and values;

(c) to assist in the establishment of an inter-country news exchange service, in order to increase the flow of international, national and regional news and information to and from neighbouring countries, and to help upgrade technology and develop more extensive communication links.

4. *Safety of Journalists*

To support the right of journalists to exercise their profession safely, and to establish a protection centre (or centres) in the region to link up with the proposed IFEX (International Freedom of Information Exchange) Action Alert Network for Asia, aiming specifically at the safety of journalists and press freedom issues.

5. *Public Service Broadcasting*

To encourage the development of journalistically independent public service broadcasting in place of existing State-controlled broadcasting structures, and to promote the development of community radio.

To upgrade educational broadcasting through support for distance education programmes such as English-language instruction and formal and non-formal education, literacy programmes, and information programmes on AIDS, the environment, children, etc.

6. *Professional Associations*

To assist Central Asian journalists, editors, publishers and broadcasters in establishing truly independent representative associations, syndicates or trade unions of journalists and associations of editors, publishers and broadcasters where such bodies do not yet exist.

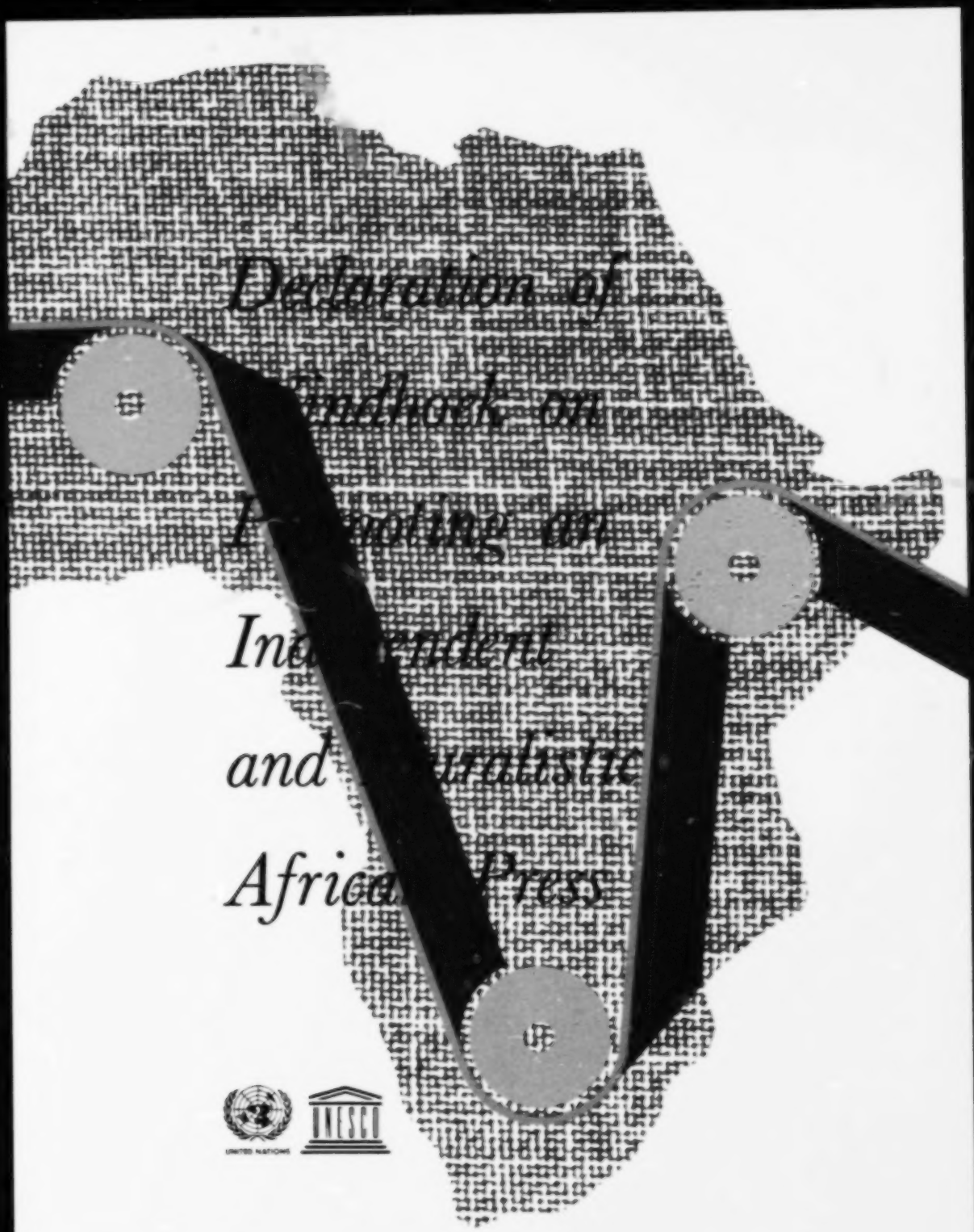
7. Special Economic Issues

To identify economic barriers to the creation of new, independent media in Central Asia and in particular to arrange a feasibility study into alternative methods of acquiring and distributing newsprint, alternative facilities for printing and distributing newspapers and magazines and alternative means of obtaining low-interest credit.

The above projects, while identified as specific needs of Central Asian media, have region-wide applications. The participants call on UNESCO and its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), international professional organizations, donor countries, foundations and other interested parties to contribute generously to, and cooperate in, the implementation of these initiatives.

The participants request that this Declaration be presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the United Nations General Assembly, and by the Director-General of UNESCO to the General Conference of UNESCO.

Alma-Ata, 9 October 1992


Declaration of
Principles on
Independent
and
African Press

We the participants in the United Nations/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 29 April to 3 May 1991,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 59(I) of 14 December 1946 stating that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and General Assembly resolution 45/76 A of 11 December 1990 on information in service of humanity,

Recalling resolution 25C/104 of the General Conference of UNESCO of 1989 in which the main focus is the promotion of "the free flow of ideas by word and image at international as well as national levels",

Noting with appreciation the statements made by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Public Information and the Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics of UNESCO at the opening of the Seminar,

Expressing our sincere appreciation to the United Nations and UNESCO for organizing the Seminar,

Expressing also our sincere appreciation to all the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental bodies and organizations, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which contributed to the United Nations/UNESCO effort to organize the Seminar,

Expressing our gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia for their kind hospitality which facilitated the success of the Seminar,

Declare that:

1 Consistent with article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development.

2 By an independent press, we mean a press independent from governmental, political or economic control or from control of materials and infrastructure essential for the production and dissemination of newspapers, magazines and periodicals.

3 By a pluralistic press, we mean the end of monopolies of any kind and the existence of the greatest possible number of newspapers, magazines and periodicals reflecting the widest possible range of opinion within the community.

4 The welcome changes that an increasing number of African States are now undergoing towards multi-party democracies provide the climate in which an independent and pluralistic press can emerge.

5 The world-wide trend towards democracy and freedom of information and expression is a fundamental contribution to the fulfilment of human aspirations.

6 In Africa today, despite the positive developments in some countries, in many countries journalists, editors and publishers are victims of repression—they are murdered, arrested, detained and censored, and are restricted by economic and political pressures such as restrictions on

newsprint, licensing systems which restrict the opportunity to publish, visa restrictions which prevent the free movement of journalists, restrictions on the exchange of news and information, and limitations on the circulation of newspapers within countries and across national borders. In some countries, one-party States control the totality of information.

7 Today, at least 17 journalists, editors or publishers are in African prisons, and 48 African journalists were killed in the exercise of their profession between 1969 and 1990.

8 The General Assembly of the United Nations should include in the agenda of its next session an item on the declaration of censorship as a grave violation of human rights falling within the purview of the Commission on Human Rights.

9 African States should be encouraged to provide constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press and freedom of association.

10 To encourage and consolidate the positive changes taking place in Africa, and to counter thé negative ones, the international community—specifically, international organizations (governmental as well as non-governmental), development agencies and professional associations—should as a matter of priority direct funding support towards the development and establishment of non-governmental newspapers, magazines and periodicals that reflect the society as a whole and the different points of view within the communities they serve.

11 All funding should aim to encourage pluralism as well as independence. As a consequence, the public media should be funded only where authorities guarantee a constitutional and effective freedom of information and expression and the independence of the press.

12 To assist in the preservation of the freedoms enumerated above, the establishment of truly independent, representative associations, syndicates or trade unions of journalists, and associations of editors

and publishers, is a matter of priority in all the countries of Africa where such bodies do not now exist.

13 The national media and labour relations laws of African countries should be drafted in such a way as to ensure that such representative associations can exist and fulfil their important tasks in defence of press freedom.

14 As a sign of good faith, African Governments that have jailed journalists for their professional activities should free them immediately. Journalists who have had to leave their countries should be free to return to resume their professional activities.

15 Cooperation between publishers within Africa, and between publishers of the North and South (for example through the principle of twinning), should be encouraged and supported.

16 As a matter of urgency, the United Nations and UNESCO, and particularly the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), should initiate detailed research, in cooperation with governmental (especially UNDP) and non-governmental donor agencies, relevant non-governmental organizations and professional associations, into the following specific areas:

(i) identification of economic barriers to the establishment of news media outlets, including restrictive import duties, tariffs and quotas for such things as newsprint, printing equipment, and typesetting and word processing machinery, and taxes on the sale of newspapers, as a prelude to their removal;

(ii) training of journalists and managers and the availability of professional training institutions and courses;

(iii) legal barriers to the recognition and effective operation of trade unions or associations of journalists, editors and publishers;

(iv) a register of available funding from development and other agencies, the conditions attaching to the release of such funds, and the methods of applying for them;

(v) the state of press freedom, country by country, in Africa.

17 In view of the importance of radio and television in the field of news and information, the United Nations and UNESCO are invited to recommend to the General Assembly and the General Conference the convening of a similar seminar of journalists and managers of radio and television services in Africa, to explore the possibility of applying similar concepts of independence and pluralism to those media.

18 The international community should contribute to the achievement and implementation of the initiatives and projects set out in the annex to this Declaration.

19 This Declaration should be presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the United Nations General Assembly, and by the Director-General of UNESCO to the General Conference of UNESCO.

ANNEX

Initiatives and Projects Identified in the Seminar

I

Development of co-operation between private African newspapers:

- to aid them in the mutual exchange of their publications;
- to aid them in the exchange of information;
- to aid them in sharing their experience by the exchange of journalists;
- to organize on their behalf training courses and study trips for their journalists, managers and technical personnel.

II

Creation of separate, independent national unions for publishers, news editors and journalists.

III

Creation of regional unions for publishers, editors and independent journalists.

IV

Development and promotion of non-governmental regulations and codes of ethics in each country in order to defend more effectively the profession and ensure its credibility.

V

Financing of a study on the readership of independent newspapers in order to set up groups of advertising agents.

VI

Financing of a feasibility study for the establishment of an independent press aid foundation and research into identifying capital funds for the foundation.

VII

Financing of a feasibility study for the creation of a central board for the purchase of newsprint and the establishment of such a board.

VIII

Support and creation of regional African press enterprises.

IX

Aid with a view to establishing structures to monitor attacks on freedom of the press and the independence of journalists following the example of the West African Journalists' Association.

X

Creation of a data bank for the independent African press for the documentation of news items essential to newspapers.

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